

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 00744 120546Z

22-11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 IO-11 OES-03 AID-05 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9680

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0744

FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OTRA, BG, IN, US

SUBJ: VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF IRRIGATION ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT

1. MR. B. M. ABBAS, ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT ON FLOOD CONTROL, IRRIGATION AND POWER WHO WE UNDERSTAND IS ACTUALLY THE CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FARAKKA BARRAGE, CALLED ME YESTERDAY TO SAY THAT DEPUTY CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR COMMODORE KHAN HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH ME BANGLADESH'S WATER PROBLEMS WITH INDIA (SEE DACCA 0691) AND THAT THE COMMODORE HAD ASKED HIM TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE ON FEBRUARY 17 FOR THE UNITED STATES. ABBAS EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD BE IN NEW YORK FEBRUARY 23 - 27 TO ATTEND A PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE UN WATER CONFERENCE AND THAT HE WOULD PROCEED FROM THERE TO WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE WORLD BANK AND HIS OWN EMBASSY ON BANGLADESH'S WATER PROBLEMS. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE IF POSSIBLE TO CALL ON AN OFFICIAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND ASKED FOR MY HELP. I SAID I WOULD BE GLAD TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT OF HIS VISIT AND HOPED I WOULD BE ABLE TO TELL HIM BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE THAT AN APPOINTMENT, AT LEAST IN PRINCIPLE, HAD BEEN MADE FOR HIM.

2. IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE WASHINGTON, I WOULD RECOMMEND
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PAGE 02 DACCA 00744 120546Z

THAT YOU SEE ABBAS. ABBAS (WHO IS NOT BE CONFUSED

WITH ONE OF THE "SPECIAL ADVISORS" WHO FUNCTION AS DE FACTO CABINET MEMBERS) IS A 64 YEAR-OLD RETIRED GOVERNMENT SERVANT. AN ENGINEER, HE HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS CAREER IN WORK RELATED TO IRRIGATION AND FLOOD CONTROL, ENDING IT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE EAST PAKISTAN WATER AND POWER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY. HIS PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATIONS OVER FARAKKA BEGAN IN THE PAKISTAN PERIOD, AND HE WAS A KEY MEMBER OF SEVERAL OF THE PAKISTANI DELEGATIONS. WE ARE TOLD, BY THE WAY, THAT THE INDIANS FIND HIM A DIFFICULT BARGAINER AND DOUBTLESS ASSIGN MUCH RESPONSIBILITY TO HIM FOR WHAT THEY CLAIM IS BANGLADESH'S FAILURE TO CARRY THROUGH ON THAT PORTION OF INTERIM AGREEMENT ON FARAKKA ENTERED LAST APRIL 18 WHICH CALLS ON BOTH COUNTRIES TO EXCHANGE CERTAIN TECHNICAL DATA. ABBAS HAS THE RANK APPROXIMATELY OF A SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT HERE AND HE UNDERSTAND HIS APPOINTMENT AT WORLD BANK BE EITHER WITH PRESIDENT OR VICE PRESIDENT.

4. PLEASE ADVISE.
BOSTER

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NNN

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